



NEWS RELEASE

PRESS OFFICE

Release Date: March 31, 1999

Release No. 99-30

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SBA ANNOUNCES Y2K MATCHMAKER FAIRS TO PAIR Y2K EXPERTS WITH SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS SEEKING ASSISTANCE

“A Call to Action -- Is Your Business Y2K OK?” or “Are You Y2K OK?”

WASHINGTON – U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) today announced plans to help small business owners become “Y2K OK” by sponsoring Matchmaker Fairs designed to introduce small firms with Y2K problems to firms and individuals capable of helping them address and fix those Y2K problems.

The **Y2K Matchmaker Fairs** will introduce local Y2K solutions providers to small business owners who have conducted self-assessments and discovered Y2K problems. The fairs also will encourage small business owners who have not yet conducted assessments to move more quickly to remedy their computer problems.

“The Y2K Matchmaker Fairs move our efforts on behalf of small businesses to the hands-on action stage,” said SBA Administrator Aída Alvarez. **“We hope to attract a large number of Y2K solutions providers to each matchmaker fair, allowing them to introduce themselves and their firm’s capabilities to small business clients who have not been able to find individuals qualified to help them.”**

The Y2K Matchmaker Fairs will be held at SBA’s Business Information Centers (BICs) and other locations in 19 cities throughout the country. Fairs are scheduled for the following dates and locations:

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|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Seattle, Wash. | April 28 | Washington, D.C. | May 26 |
| Albany, N.Y. | April 28 | Spokane, Wash. | May 26 |
| Chicago, Ill. | May 5 and June 16 | Providence, R.I. | May 27 |
| San Francisco, Calif. | May 5 | Atlanta, Ga. | May 27 |
| Dallas/FT Worth, Texas | May 12 | Los Angeles, Calif. | Week of June 21 |
| Burlington, Vt. | May 18 | Missoula, Mont. | August 5 |
| Clarksburg, W. Va. | May 19 | Helena, Mont. | August 12 |
| Charlotte, N.C. | May 20 (tentative) | Billings, Mont. | August 19 |
| Hato Rey, P.R. | May 21 | Great Falls, Mont. | August 26 |
| Tacoma, Wash. | May 25 | | |

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“We know that addressing and fixing Y2K problems can seem an insurmountable problem for a small business owner fully engaged in operating his/her business. Finding help in the form of a Y2K professional can also be daunting, especially when one has no idea where to start looking. Matchmaker Fairs will introduce those with problems to those with solutions in a no pressure, collegial setting,” said Monika Edwards Harrison, SBA’s associate administrator for the Office of Business Initiatives.

Y2K solutions providers and small business owners interested in participating in the Y2K Matchmaker Fair in your area should contact the local SBA district office for more information. Additional information on the Y2K Matchmaker Fairs is available on the SBA Web site at **www.sba.gov/y2k**.

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The U.S. Small Business Administration, established in 1953, provides financial, technical and management assistance to help Americans start, run, and grow their businesses. With a portfolio of business loans, loan guarantees and disaster loans worth more than \$45 billion, the SBA is the nation’s largest single financial backer of small businesses. Last year, the SBA offered management and technical assistance to more than one million small business owners. The SBA also plays a major role in the government’s disaster relief efforts by making low-interest recovery loans to both homeowners and businesses. America’s 24 million small businesses employ more than 50 percent of the private workforce, generate more than half of the nation’s gross domestic product, and are the principal source of new jobs in the U.S. economy.

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